

## Message Text

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NADA/ASSESSMENT/MAY 01/MFA WASHINGTON

POLITICAL ANALYSIS: SOVIET-JAPANESE FISHING NEGOTIATIONS

1. SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS HAVE SUFFERED YET ANOTHER  
SETBACK. MOSCOW'S INSISTENCE ON INCLUDING THE NORTHERN  
TERRITORIES IN ITS NEWLY DECLARED 200-MILE FISHING ZONE  
HAS REOPENED AN ISSUE OF EXTREME POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC  
SENSITIVITY FOR THE JAPANESE. WHILE THE TWO NATIONS ARE

TO RESUME FISHING NEGOTIATIONS THE FIRST WEEK IN MAY, HEAVY-HANDED SOVIET CONDUCT IN THE STALEMATED MARCH-APRIL NEGOTIATIONS MAY HAVE ANTAGONIZED TOKYO EVEN MORE THAN THE SOVIETS REALIZE.

2. BACKGROUND:

3. POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TOKYO AND MOSCOW HAVE DETERIORATED STEADILY OVER THE PAST YEAR. THE WELL-PUBLICIZED DEFECTION OF A SOVIET PILOT WITH HIS MIG-25 AIRCRAFT TO JAPAN ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1976, AND ITS AFTERMATH SEEM TO HAVE INFURIATED MOSCOW.

4. FURTHERMORE, ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAVE FAILED TO DEVELOP AS THE SOVIETS EVIDENTLY HOPED: JAPAN HAS RESTRICTED BANK LOANS AND TIGHTENED UP ON CREDIT FOR THE SOVIET UNION, AND HAS BEEN FAR LESS FORTHCOMING THAN EXPECTED ON SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT. IN ESSENCE, THE JAPANESE HAVE REFUSED TO GET DEEPLY INVOLVED IN MAJOR SIBERIAN PROJECTS, SUCH AS THE TYUMEN OIL FIELD PROJECT, UNLESS THE US IS ALSO INVOLVED, BOTH FOR SELF-PROTECTION AGAINST SOVIET PRESSURING AND TO NEUTRALIZE CHINESE REACTIONS.

5. TROUBLED WATERS:

6. THE USSR, WHOSE DEPENDENCE ON FISH PRODUCTS FOR  
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DIETARY PROTEIN HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY OF LATE, IS CURRENTLY BEING FORCED OUT OF MANY OF ITS TRADITIONAL FISHING GROUNDS BY THE PROLIFERATION OF 200-MILE FISHING ZONES WORLDWIDE. ON DECEMBER 10, 1976, THE USSR DECLARED ITS INTENTION TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN 200-MILE RESTRICTED ZONE. ON THE SOVIET PACIFIC COAST, THIS ZONE ENCOMPASSES A LARGE PART OF THE TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FISHING GROUNDS, AN AREA WHICH IN THE PAST PROVIDED ROUGHLY 16 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL JAPANESE CATCH.

7. ON FEBRUARY 24, THE USSR ANNOUNCED THAT ENFORCEMENT OF THIS ZONE WOULD BEGIN ON MARCH 1. THE WORDING OF THAT DECREE POSED IMMEDIATE POLITICAL AS WELL AS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FOR TOKYO SINCE IT SPECIFIED THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES AS SOVIET TERRITORY. JAPAN HAS SOUGHT RETURN OF THESE FOUR ISLANDS NORTH OF HOKKAIDO FROM THE SOVIETS SINCE THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THEIR STATUS IS NOW THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT IMPEDIMENT TO GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. TOKYO HAS RESISTED EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE ON THE BASIS OF THE FEBRUARY DECREE, ON THE GROUNDS THAT ANY AGREEMENT WHICH INCORPORATED ITS LANGUAGE WOULD REPRESENT RENUNCIATION OF JAPANESE RIGHTS TO THE ISLANDS.

8. ON FEBRUARY 27, JAPANESE AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MINISTER SUZUKI VISITED MOSCOW TO DISCUSS MODALITIES FOR JAPANESE FISHING WITHIN THE 200-MILE SOVIET ZONE. AFTER SEVERAL ROUGH NEGOTIATING SESSIONS, HE CAME AWAY WITH AGREEMENT TO OPEN FORMAL TALKS ON MARCH 15 ON AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT. SUZUKI STAYED IN MOSCOW AN EXTRA TWO DAYS IN AN EFFORT TO WORK OUT AGREED LANGUAGE FOR A JOINT COMMUNIQUE, BUT HAD TO SETTLE FOR AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES INSTEAD, AGREEING MERELY THAT:

(A)--JAPANESE FISHING OPERATIONS IN THE SOVIET ZONE WOULD CONTINUE FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH; BUT

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(B)--NO SALMON AND HERRING FISHING WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE SOVIET ZONE WHILE TALKS WERE GOING ON.

9. SUZUKI ALSO INFORMED SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO SET UP A 200-MILE FISHING ZONE OF ITS OWN, AS WELL AS A 12-MILE TERRITORIAL LIMIT, WITH CERTAIN STRAITS USED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRANSIT EXEMPTED, AROUND THE JAPANESE ISLANDS.

10. THE TALKS IN MOSCOW ON AN INTERIM AGREEMENT GOT UNDER WAY ON MARCH 15, WHILE THE ANNUAL JAPANESE-SOVIET FISHERY TALKS SETTING CATCH QUOTAS FOR BOTH COUNTRIES IN THE NORTH-WEST PACIFIC BEGAN SIMULTANEOUSLY IN TOKYO. THESE LATTER DISCUSSIONS BROKE OFF ON MARCH 28, IN DEADLOCK OVER THE QUESTION OF JAPANESE SALMON TONNAGE.

11. STALEMATED TALKS:

12. THE PARALLEL MOSCOW TALKS ALSO QUICKLY BROKE DOWN. ACCORDING TO JAPANESE SOURCES, THE STALEMATE CENTERED ON FIVE KEY ISSUES:

(A)--EQUAL QUOTAS. THE SOVIETS DEMANDED A FISHING CATCH IN JAPANESE TERRITORIAL WATERS EQUIVALENT TO THE JAPANESE CATCH THE THE SOVIET ZONE, A PRO-POSAL THE JAPANESE CLAIMED WAS UNFAIR AND NOT BASED ON PAST PRACTICE.

(B)--NORTHERN TERRITORIES. THE SOVIETS DEMANDED THAT THE JAPANESE IN EFFECT EXPLICITLY AFFIRM SOVIET SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE DISPUTED NORTHERN TERRITORIES. THE JAPANESE REFUSED.

(C)--SOVIET FISHING IN JAPANESE WATERS. THE SOVIET INSISTED ON THE RIGHT TO CONTINUE FISHING BETWEEN

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THE JAPANESE 3- AND 12-MILE LIMITS. (EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE SOVIET SARDINE CATCH COMES FROM WITHIN THE 12-MILE LIMIT.) JAPAN REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL.

(D)--DEFERRAL OF QUOTA DECISION. THE SOVIETS ASKED FOR DEFERRAL OF ANY DISCUSSION OF QUOTAS UNTIL ALL OTHER CONTENTIOUS POINTS WERE SETTLED; THE JAPANESE INSISTED ON ESTABLISHING QUOTAS BEFORE AN INTERIM AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED.

(E)--LONG-TERM AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS PROPOSED SIGNATURE OF A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT RECOGNIZING SOVIET JURISDICTION OVER JAPANESE FISHERMEN WITHIN THE SOVIET 200-MILE ZONE. SINCE THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT CANNOT AGREE TO A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT WITHOUT DIET APPROVAL, THE JAPANESE NEGOTIATORS INSISTED ON AN INTERIM AGREEMENT, WHICH WOULD AVOID THE JURISDICTIONAL QUESTION UNTIL THE DIET COULD ACT.

13. IN AN EFFORT TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK, JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA SENT CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SONODA TO MOSCOW TO CONFER WITH SOVIET LEADERS. SONODA, WHO HAD BEEN A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT A HIGHLY PUBLICIZED ANTI-SOVIET RALLY IN TOKYO ON MARCH 30, WAS INITIALLY DENIED A SOVIET VISA. AFTER CONSIDERABLE DELAY, HE FINALLY MET WITH SOVIET PREMIER KOSYGIN ON APRIL 7. THIS MEETING LED TO A REVIVAL OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISHKOV AND SUZUKI, WHO HAD RETURNED TO MOSCOW A DAY EARLIER.

14. SUSPENSION UNTIL MAY:

15. IN THESE LATTER TALKS, IN AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE IMPASSE OVER THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES ISSUE, SUZUKI SUGGESTED THAT THE ORIGINAL DECEMBER 10, 1976, DECREE OF THE SUPREME SOVIET ESTABLISHING THE 200-MILE ZONE BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR AN AGREEMENT, SINCE THE BROAD LANGUAGE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS DECREE AVOIDED SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE ISLANDS AS BELONGING TO THE USSR. (THE FEBRUARY 24 RESOLUTION, IN CONTRAST, SPECIFICALLY DEFINES THE 200-MILE LIMIT FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES.) THE SOVIETS REJECTED THE PROPOSAL. AS A RESULT OF THESE AND OTHER DIFFERENCES, NEGOTIATIONS WERE SUSPENDED ON APRIL 14, TO BE RESUMED IN EARLY MAY.

16. UPON SUSPENSION OF THE TALKS, BOTH SIDES PUBLICLY BLAMED THE OTHER FOR THE FAILURE. SUZUKI, IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON APRIL 15, STRESSED:

(A)--JAPAN'S ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO THE USSR, PARTICULARLY

IN SIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT;

(B)--POSSIBILITY OF CLOSER SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS; AND

(C)--JAPAN'S INTENTION TO ESTABLISH ITS OWN 200-MILE ZONE  
IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIETS ON A MORE EQUAL BASIS.

17. ISHKOV THE SAME DAY BLAMED THE JAPANESE FOR THE BREAK-  
DOWN AND ACCUSED THE JAPANESE PRESS OF STIRRING UP PUBLIC  
OPINION AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION.

18. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE:

19. THE NEGOTIATIONS SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE ON MAY 5  
WILL PROVE TO BE ROUGH GOING FOR THE JAPANESE, WHO ARE  
UNDER DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE TO CONCLUDE AN AGREEMENT  
BY MAY 15, THE START OF THE FOUR-MONTH FISHING SEASON.  
THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER, ARE UNLIKELY TO ABANDON THEIR POSI-  
TIONS ON THE ISSUES INVOLVED WITHOUT SECURING SIGNIFICANT  
CONCESSIONS FROM THE JAPANESE--FOR EXAMPLE, A SLOWDOWN IN  
ANY MOVES TOWARD PEKING AND/OR PROVISION FOR LONG-TERM  
CREDITS AND EASED BANK LOANS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
SIBERIAN RESOURCES. THE JAPANESE WILL ATTEMPT TO USE THE  
THREAT OF BETTER RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND MOSCOW'S DESIRE  
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FOR JAPANESE INVESTMENT TO SOFTEN SOVIET DEMANDS.

20. SO FAR, THE SOVIETS SEEM TO HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY  
TO HUMILIATE THE JAPANESE, IN PART PROBABLY IN RETALIATION  
FOR THE MIG INCIDENT, BUT ALSO PERHAPS IN KEEPING WITH  
MOSCOW'S BASICALLY ANTI-ORIENTAL PREJUDICES. THE JAPANESE,  
FOR THEIR PART, ARE NOT LIKELY TO FORGET THE HARSH TREAT-  
MENT THEY HAVE RECEIVED, NOR ARE THEY LIKELY TO PAY  
DOLS 10 MILLION AS REPARATIONS FOR THE DISMANTLING OF THE  
MIG-25 AS THE SOVIETS REPORTEDLY HAVE DEMANDED. MOSCOW  
MAY WELL HAVE PUSHED TOKYO TO GREATER ANTAGONISM THAN IT  
CALCULATED. CHRISTOPHER

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